

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION IAEA VIENNA PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 108268

FOLLOWING BRASILIA 3567 ACTION WASHDC SECSTATE MAY 20TH.

QUOTE

S E C R E T BRASILIA 3567

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: TECH, IN, BR

SUBJ: BRAZILIAN REACTION TO INDIAN NUCLEAR TESTING

REF: STATE 104647

SUMMARY: INDIAN NUCLEAR TEST RECEIVED EXTENSIVE COVERAGE IN THE BRAZILIAN PRESS. ALTHOUGH EDITORIAL COMMENT HAS BEEN LIMITED THUS FAR, THE TONE OF PUBLISHED COMMENT IS TINGED WITH ADMIRATION FOR "POOR BOY" MAKING GOOD. THE INDIAN TEST WILL PROBABLY SPUR BRAZIL'S OWN NUCLEAR AMBITIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE INDIAN NUCLEAR TEST WAS REPORTED PROMINENTLY IN THE BRAZILIAN PRESS, DRAWING MAINLY ON WIRE SERVICE COVERAGE. STORIES NOTED INEVITABLE IMPACT OF THIS DEVELOPMENT ON POWER BALANCE IN ASIA, AND NOTED THAT, IN WORDS OF PRESTIGIOUS ESTADO DE SAO PUALO "...ACCORDING TO OBSERVERS, INDIA'S ACCESSION TO THE ATOMIC CLUB CAN UNLEASH A REACTION FROM
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VARIOUS COUNTRIES CAPABLE OF PRODUCING THE BOMB--INCLUDING

LATIN AMERICANS--WHO FEEL THEMSELVES UNPROTECTED IN THE
FACE OF THE INDIAN TEST."

2. LIBERAL JORNAL DE BRASILIA FEATURED A FRONT-PAGE
SPREAD WITH A HEADLINE PROCLAIMING THAT BRAZIL, ARGENTINA
AND ISRAEL WERE FRONT-RUNNERS IN COMPETITION TO BECOME THE
SEVENTH NUCLEAR POWER. THE ARTICLE NOTED THE CONTRAST
BETWEEN THE PACIFIST GANDHI TRADITION AND DEVELOPMENT OF
AN INDIAN NUCLEAR CAPABILITY, STRESSED THE INDIAN DECLARATION
OF NON-USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, AND CONCLUDED WITH THE
OBSERVATION THAT BRAZIL HAD GREAT INTEREST IN LEARNING FROM
THE "INDIAN MODEL" OF NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT. THE IMPORTANT
JORNAL DO BRASIL REMINDED ITS READERS THAT BRAZIL (ALONG
WITH INDIA, ISRAEL, FRANCE AND ARGENTINA) WAS NOT A SIGNATORY
TO THE NPT AND NOTED THAT GENERAL COSTA E SILVA, SHORTLY
AFTER HIS INAUGURATION AS THE SECOND "REVOLUTIONARY"
PRESIDENT OF BRAZIL IN 1967, HAD STATED THAT, "...THE
DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN THE NUCLEAR ENERGY
FIELD INEVITABLY INCLUDES, AT SOME POINT, THE USE OF EX-
PLOSIONS." THE JORNAL DE BRASILIA ALSO NOTED THAT, ACCORD-
ING TO A 1967 STUDY, BRAZIL COULD CONSTRUCT ITS OWN
NUCLEAR BOMB IN 10 TO 15 YEARS AT A COST OF 1.5 BILLION
CRUZEIROS. PRESS COVERAGE, IN GENERAL, TINGED WITH ADMIRATION
FOR INDIAN ACCOMPLISHMENT, ALTHOUGH STATEMENTS OF AMERICAN
STATE AND DEFENSE DEPARTMENT PRESS SPOKESMEN WERE PROMINENTLY
FEATURED.

3. WITH RESPECT TO SPECIFIC QUESTIONS RAISED REFTTEL,
ALTHOUGH THE BRAZILIAN AUTHORITIES HAVE NOT RELEASED ANY
COMMENT, WE THINK IT MOST UNLIKELY THAT THE BRAZILIAN
GOVERNMENT WILL EXPRESS DISPLEASURE OVER THE INDIAN TEST.
RATHER, THE TEST IS LIKELY TO SPUR BRAZILIAN RESEARCH AND
DEVELOPMENT IN THE NUCLEAR FIELD, BY DEMONSTRATING THAT A
DEVELOPING COUNTRY CAN ACHIEVE A SORT OF BIG POWER STATUS
IN SPITE OF DIRE POVERTY, AND BY REMINDING BRAZILIANS,
WHO ARE ALREADY SENSITIZED TO THE FACT, THAT ARGENTINA,
WITH ALL ITS POLITICAL INSTABILITY, IS INDEED A POTENTIAL
NUCLEAR POWER. WE JUDGE THAT THE INDIAN TEST WILL REINFORCE
THE GOB'S NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE NPT. THE U.S.
GOVERNMENT'S REACTION TO THE INDIAN TEST IS UNLIKELY TO
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HAVE A DETERRENT EFFECT ON BRAZIL'S NUCLEAR INTENTIONS OR
ITS POSITION ON NPT.
CRIMMS UNQUOTE RUSH

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